

Attractive

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Summary: "Corrin, you are most certainly like a lodestone." An attempt at this "pick-up" thingamajig his loyal retainers forced him into was more of a headache than Prince Leo ever imagined.

Attractive

****Attractive****

He stared at her eyes directly. Her eyesâ€” two beautiful shades of rich, chocolate hazelnutâ€”were incredibly bewitching; enticing him to drown deep under her curious pulchritude like a wicked sorcerer's spell. Truth to be told, he wouldn't be colored surprised if he found out that he was being spun into an ethereal spell. Those eyes were absolutely surreal. Looking closer, they were not brown at all. They were actually some kind of luxuriant mix of the color ofâ€”

"Leo, are you okay? You look like you're in a daze."

Having caught the notes of her uplifting voice, Leo did a double take and positioned himself into his usual posture.

"Ah, yes, of course. Now, back to what I was going to say," Leo, who was actually the third-in-line for the throne of Nohr, raised his armored right hand to his lips and gave out a soft exhale,

"Corrin, you are most certainly like a lodestone."

Corrin shifted in her bed. She definitely could not catch the fluffy little Z's that a person needs to possess in order to be branded asleep. She did try to close her eyes and tried to count cute and soft sheep to lull herself, but still, she obtained not a wink. The reason? One proper noun: Leo.

After promptly being accused of having some qualities of a rock or another, Corrin good-naturedly chuckled and inquired as to what the young prince Leo meant by his claim. To be blunt, she had no ideas as to whatever thingamajig the young man was referring to, but she had to be polite. She was wondering if he was going to utter a joke. Leo making a joke was a rare feast. But after being put in the spotlight, the man in question merely froze over and looked down at her with such a complicated facial expression: she could not perceive as to whether his countenance was that of immense pain or disgust.

She took it as the latter.

And now, after the topic of her worries fled without another word, Corrin was left to ponder about why Leo would hold such an opinion of her being like a stone. Was she being cold to him; you know, heart of stone? Impossible. Then perhaps, was she getting out of shape? But how was that possible, given that all of them undergo training every single day? Then could it beâ€¦ That Leo thought she was such a heavy load and was only a burden to the team? Corrin dreaded the thought.

And so, fanning the fire of her resolution, Corrin hurriedly jumped out of her bed and raced straight to where Leo probably was: his private quarters.

The wind was chilly and the atmosphere was hushed. The excited clamor of a variety of personalities has long since ceased and in came the soft murmurs of the insects of dark. It was eventide. And yet, in this particular room, the sound of metal scratching the surface of parchment pinpricked the dull wisps of smoke wafting from a lighted candle. Scribble, scribble; a crinkling of paper. A soft sigh.

For the nth time, Leo folded his armor-less hand over the neat piece of stationery and crumpled it before throwing it alongside its kin; creating a strangely organized chaos. He just could not get it. He has always been very much eloquent with his words; it was a skill he had learned to master as a prince of Nohr. And yet, for some odd reason or two, he just could not gather his thoughts to deliver a perfect message to that one, single woman. It was a mess. An organized mess.

And, well, by organized, he meant his handwriting; not the content itself.

"_Dear Corrin, I hope you are enjoying a wonderful dayâ€¦"_

"_Dear Sister, your eyes are captivating beyond beliefâ€¦"_

"_Dear Corrin, the night is quite peaceful. It would be rather enjoyable to spend it with youâ€¦"_

He hung his head at the memory. He has been going at this writing frolic for quite a few days now, trying to find the perfect words to express his growing appreciation. He was trying to be formal and sincere, but unfortunately, things were not going as smoothly as he would like them to be. His letters were going awry; more like some lowlife kissagrams than letters from a prince. Whoever would think of liking those messages in the least?

That was why, for the first time in his life, he buried his pride

under his armor and approached his retainers for advice. It was no problem; he pretended to have been asking for a friend of his. Odin answered him with a bunch of gibberish that he could not comprehend, and Niles did nothing but stab suggestive ideas in his direction. After some continuous snaps of rejection and a few headaches from Leo himself, his eccentric retainers finally gave him a tame suggestion.

And tried he did. This outlandish act of courtship called "picking-up". How contemptible. Unpleasant, but he would opt for that over stalking the women's bath at any time of the day.

And regretted he did. He tried "picking-up" Corrin but he suddenly felt so reticent he just did a tactical retreat. He had to. It was unbecoming of a prince. And so, with not a drop of romantic ideas left in his pool of intellectual properties, the eloquent prince reverted back to the old way of seeking someone's affection: through the power of letters.

With a listless sigh, the lackluster Leo picked up his quill and once more, tried to express his feelings through the clean piece of parchment.

A knock; a twitch of the hand. A melodic voice; a pair of widened mocha eyes.

"Leo, are you awake?"

Great, just what he needed right now.

"â€| Sister?"

It was barely audible, but he caught the sound of a relieved puff, "â€| Thank goodness. Leo, I have something I want to talk to you about. Can I come in?"

"What was it you wanted to discuss?" Leo asked whilst not doing any action leading towards him opening the door to the inside of his quarters.

Liar, Leo thought to himself. He offered such a question, and yet he was absolutely certain as to what the content of her inquiries were. Terrified of what she had in store, Leo abruptly set his hands in motion and swept his chaos of paper balls off his desk. If he was provided with more time, he would neatly shovel them inside a bag and take them out; but unfortunately, he did not possess such a thing right now. And so, he hurriedly kicked his gubbins into the back of his bookshelf. After that, he straightened his back and primly sat himself.

"Oh," Corrin started from behind Leo's door, "Just about that event earlier. It's been bothering me."

Ah, so he got the correct assumption, after all.

"Is that so?" He almost stammered, "Then, you may come in."

Leo may or may not have heard Corrin utter a short _"Thanks"_; he was not so sure given that he was still too busy composing himself. Luckily, he had been preparing for this particular critical moment;

but he still needed all the confidence he could get.

"So, uhm, Leo." Corrin started, her heart hammering and preparing to hear the worst, "About me being a stoneâ€¦ thing. Do you..?"

"Forget about that."

"Oh," She had expected this, but she needed to know, "I'm afraid I must know, Leo. If I did anything to warrant your distaste, just tell me and I shall do my best to do something about it."

Leo, who had started nervously playing with the button of his night clothes, halted in his mannerism and raised an eyebrow at his not-sister, "Distaste?"

Corrin was expecting more of a reaction along the lines of Leo cringing in antipathy or Leo rolling his eyes as if to say _"Obviously"_, not him being mildly curious and surprised. His rounded eyes held her in; making her stare. She tilted her head a little, about to say something, but then she noticed the prince holding his mouth slightly agape. Her eyesight drifted from his eyes and onto his mouth. Those lips were the ones always forming the words that held so much power; those words that could penetrate the soul of the listener. He was always so talented with the way he spoke, but now she wondered if he could do others things with his mouth besideâ€¦"

"Sister. I was asking you what you meant. Please do not be so rude as to suddenly trail off after announcing a focal sentence."

Corrin, flustered to have been caught _fantasizing_ about her _brother_, spluttered some words she have not given much thought, "Well, uhm, stone, yes well, you said I was some sort of stone so I just thought you hated me and thought I was a burden and stuff."

She almost slapped herself.

Cross-legged, Leo stared at her from where he was sitting. He held her gaze for a few more seconds before sighing in disbelief, "Well sister, I suppose it's true that I sometimes question your competitiveness, but to go so far as to dislike you? Nonsense."

He looked positively overtaxed. Corrin, nervous that she somehow exhausted her younger brother with herâ€¦ less than scholastic remarks, closed her eyes in recoil, "Well, you comparing me with a stone was definitely out of nowhereâ€¦"

"Here."

Corrin was, in the middle of a defensive statement, suddenly cut-off by Leo curtly handing her a thick, blue book. Puzzled, the Nohrian Princess put her palms up with confused hesitation and let her adoptive brother plop the leathered book down onto her hands.

"Open it to page 358."

Leon's command was short but firm. Still befuddled by the big, sudden change in the flow of their conversation, the Princess dithered but ended up doing what the Prince instructed her to. Corrin balanced the heavy book in her right hand and used her left one to quickly leaf

through the crisp pages filled with heavy texts.

"Let's seeâ€¦ 358â€¦ 358. Got it."

After making sure that she got the correct number, Corrin quickly darted her two beautiful shades of rich, chocolate hazelnut eyesâ€”as Prince Leo described them in his subconscious earlierâ€”back and forth across the spread out page. She narrowed her eyes and scrunched her forehead in order to keep her focus on the rich, complicated walls of text in front of her but no matter her effort, she could not discern what in the world was so important in the page as to make essential the ignorance of her proposed subject.

"Leo, I fear I don't getâ€”oh." Corrin halted before doing a double take, "Oh! This is the stone you were talking about, is it not?"

Leo only gave her a slight smile before urging her to go on with a flick of his hand, "Yes, the lodestone. What does it say?"

Corrin withdrew her eyes from the attractively effeminate face of her younger brother and fixated them onto the book in her hands, "Yes. Here, it says a lodestone is a naturally magnetized piece of mineral magnetite and that they are naturally-occurring magnets which can attract iron." She paused, letting the information sink in; but when she could not properly process what the significance of this newfound knowledge was, she turned back to Leo with a hopeless look on her face, "Leo, I'm sorry but I really don't understand."

With a deep sigh, Leo enveloped his left arm across his side and brought his right hand to his forehead in a seemingly exasperated expression, "Do I always have spoon feed every single thing to you?" He paused to remove his hand from his face and looked straight at Corrin, "You're like a lodestone because you're aâ€”"

Leo faltered for a bit, but he quickly slightly shook his head before continuing what he was trying to say, "Because you're attâ€¦ attâ€¦ you're attraâ€” By the gods, DARN IT."

After a few silent strings of curses Leo muttered to himself, the confusion etched into Corrin's face slowly morphed into the face of amusement. Her hands instantaneously flew to her mouth, trying to stifle in the laughter trying to break out of her throat. She giggled a painfully silent one. After checking if she would burst out and confirming that she would not, the princess cracked a simper and tucked her hair behind her left ear.

"Leo, call me crazy but were you trying to tell me a joke back then?"

"Well yes I was foolish enough to heed the advice of my retainers and decided to do that idiotic pickâ€”wait, joke?"

"Yes," Corrin nodded at Leo's direction, "I understand how much effort it must have taken for you to pull this off."

Leo could not believe it. He was arduously _trying_ to artistically convey his honest opinion towards Corrin, but it seems like his efforts were only taken as a _joke_.

Well, the idea itself was a buffoon's story, he must

admit.

Nonetheless, the dark knight of a prince felt some sort of chemical reaction dangerously emulsifying inside his heart. A dash of relief, a cup of disappointment, a spoonful of exasperation, and a bucket of desperation started mixing up and churning inside the pits of his stomach, making him jittery and even more drawn out. The embarrassment he was undergoing through not a minute ago was immediately extinguished like the flames of the candle on his table. And then, not even giving him a miniscule of a second to breath, the words he did not want to reveal came spewing out of his mouth like a rain of arrows mercilessly pouring down on jejune villagers of a ruined tribe.

"I said no such joke. I was completely, honestly, sincerely trying to convey my candor thoughts towards you. I do not know about you, but I certainly would not invite a lady out in a fine sunshine and daisies weather with a bouquet of fresh flowers neatly tucked behind my back just to cryptically avow how much I dislike you. And I certainly would not go through such lengths to impart to you words of hilarity."

Like a thunder spell to her limbs, Corrin felt stunned and unable to open her mouth. Prince Leo was staring at her; his eyes locked onto her and secreting somberness he had oft shown towards his dreadful foes. She almost trembled under the intensity, but looking deeper into his mocha eyes, a particular emotion that was out of place reached her. He held devoted sincerity. That silver lining in his turbulent silence gave her the grit to let out her voice.

"T-then," Corrin started, "What did you want to tell me?"

Leo narrowed his eyes at her and answered without hesitation, " That you're most definitely attractive to me."

The soundless room was unbearable. Princess Corrin's eyes shot as hyperbolically wide as saucers; Prince Leo's neck became a road for trails of sweat. The lady's hands flew toward her chest and seemed to be clutching her very heart; the lord's eyelids shuttered close. The moment of silence was enough to get Leo's cognitive gears working overtime, and he finally realized the mousetrap of humiliation he has recklessly snared himself into.

In an instant, the pragmatic prince's face turned as red as his favorite tomatoes.

"Well, I have said my piece!" The male royalty turned his back towards the woman of his affection and strode towards his bedside table before snatching a small, red book off it.

"Now, take this and leave."

Trying his hardest to put his overheating face out of Corrin's sight, he did not wait for her response and pushed her out of his quarters. He knew it was not a very gentlemanly, much less princely, act to display, but he desperately wanted the egg out of his face.

He just hoped something good would come out of the last resort he has prepared for her.

Shut out of the cozy area that was Leo's safe haven, Corrin stared at the wooden door idly; still in a state of absolute shock. She let the song of the night take her; the gentle rustling of leaves atop the sturdy trees, the quiet whispers of the chilly breeze, and the pleasant choir of the insects singing her unspoken love songs. With this, her heart calmed down, but was still not completely at peace. She needed to cool her head. In that moment, she remembered the smooth texture of the small book in her hands. Perfect.

She plopped herself down against the wall beside a warmly lit torch and gingerly lifted the cover of the book off its pages.

'_To Corrin', _the words at the back of the cover said.

She started reading. Well, at least, she _tried _to. She could not possibly read it like this. No, not because she was too distracted to understand what was written.

The words were _blacked out_.

Stirred awake by the curious state of the little book meekly resting in her hands, she flipped a bit more. On and on did she turn the pages. On and on, until she found a particular page in which some words were left unblackened.

"Huh, why would Leo leave out some words and black out the rest of the book?"

Intrigued, she began lightly tracing the tips of her fingers along the unshaded words; reciting them to herself like a sort of languor prayer.

"Anyone, can, scribble, out, wordsâ€¦ The, clever, part, is, knowing, which, words, to leaveâ€¦ The, silent, prayer ofâ€¦ Iâ€¦ loveâ€¦ youâ€¦ princess."

She expected herself to freeze again, but she did not. Perhaps she got immune to the stun after a series of it, perhaps it was the heat of the moment, or perhaps it was that she was half-expecting this. Whatever it was, her heart was calm. Her eyes were closed, as if she were leaning on a tree of tranquility. A pleasant smile graced her lips. A pleasant sigh escaped her mouth. A pleasant warmth grazed her cheeks.

An enchanting warmth, as if she just woke up from an indulging dream.

A kiss. A simple, but meaningful practice for the person you love.

"â€¦ I never thought you would read it immediately."

With a smile, Corrin lifted her eyelids and offered the man the most besotted eyes, "I never thought you'd come back for me."

The prince offered no reply to her and simply sat himself beside the princess. The quietude was relaxing; only the synchronized beating of their hearts was the reminder that they were not inside a beautiful dream.

Finally, she held his hand. Finally, she let her lips touch the dryness of his.

A kiss. To repay the warmth he conveyed to her.

"Leo..?" She asked, her lips still a hairbreadth away from his.

"â€| What is it?" He asked, his cool breath sending shivers down her spine.

"â€| I love you, too."

Love. The undefinable truth as to what she was feeling right now, and surely, for the rest of their days.

* * *

><p>AN: Thank you for reading! It's been a year since my last work, so I hope I haven't lost my touch. :) I hope you like this!

Also on AO3! works/6560269

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